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■ \$650,000 SETTLEMENT

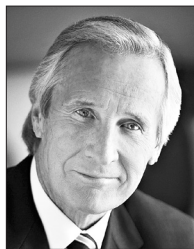
Restaurant customer receives \$650K after crash

MOTOR VEHICLE COLLISION

- **Venue:** St. Louis County Circuit Court
- **Case Number/Date:** 14SL-CC02677/Nov. 2, 2015
- **Caption:** Steven and Diana Ippolito v. Joann Merz
- **Plaintiff's Attorneys:** Craig and Donald Schlappizzi, St. Louis
- **Defendant's Attorney:** Kurt Hentz, HeplerBroom, St. Louis
- **Injuries Alleged:** leg, knee, ankle, foot
- **Injuries Detail:** trimalleolar comminuted fractures of left ankle and dislocated talus; right ankle crush; left knee laceration; spleen contusion
- **Special Damages:** \$180,000 in medical bills; \$120,000 in wife's lost wages (consortium)
- **Insurance:** AAA Automobile Insurance (for Merz); The Hartford Insurance Co. (for Ippolito)
- **Breakdown of Value:** \$50,000 from AAA; \$600,000 from Hartford Insurance



Craig Schlappizzi



Donald Schlappizzi

BY ALAN SCHER
ZAGIER

*Special to Missouri
Lawyers Media*

A 68-year-old man who was hit by a car that crashed through a popular St. Louis County fried chicken restaurant has settled a pair of claims against the late 71-year-old driver and his own insurer for a total of \$650,000.

Steven N. Ippolito, a retired Anheuser-Busch executive, was waiting on an order when Joann Merz of Crestwood drove her car into the King Edwards Chicken and Fish Restaurant on Watson Road on the afternoon of Sept. 29, 2013. Ippolito was one of three customers injured in the crash. Merz's 2001 Toyota Camry crashed through the storefront before coming to a rest 20 feet inside the restaurant, a

Crestwood police report shows. Four other customers escaped injury.

Merz, who has since died, told police that she mistakenly accelerated instead of braking.

Ippolito's injuries included trimalleolar comminuted fractures and a dislocated talus of the left ankle, a crushed right ankle, a left knee laceration, and a spleen contusion, said St. Louis plaintiff's attorneys Craig and Donald Schlappizzi.

Ippolito spent one month in the hospital and underwent three surgeries, and his wife had to quit her job to help take care of him, the attorneys said.

A St. Louis County suit filed against Merz was settled for \$50,000 — her liability policy limits — in May, several months after she died. Ippolito subsequently settled an underinsured motorist claim with The Hartford, his insurer, for an additional \$600,000.

Defense attorney Kurt Hentz of HeplerBroom in St. Louis, who represented Merz, did not respond to an interview request.